



1. "amended" A data processing apparatus for user to contract a future education fee amount now and paying for the said education fees in the future, comprising:
- a central controller including a CPU and a memory operatively connected to said CPU;
  - a data base element connected to said CPU;
- 10 at least one terminal, adapted for communicating with said central controller over a network, for transmitting to said controller user's information including the years to commencement, selected course, selected institution offering the said course, user's past academic results, user's personal information, the education fee amount to be contracted payable per period to the selected
- 15 institution for the said course selected and the user's flexibility factor for the selected course;
- said memory in said central controller containing a program, adapted to be executed by said CPU, for calculating factors relating to said user's information
- 20 based on heuristic rules programmed by the selected institution;
- wherein said calculated factors includes the future demand of the selected course, the desirability of this user, and the actual historical volatility of the selected course fee, the actual current selected course fee, the actual interest risk
- 25 free rate representing the period to commencement; and
- wherein said central controller receives said calculated factors /results from said program and user's information from said terminal, said program further, calculates the premium payable in consideration to contract the future education fee amount now, said premium includes a contractual right but not obligation to
- 30 pay the contracted fee amount within a period no longer than said date of commencement wherein such right is conditional on receiving an offer of admission from the selected institution before commencement date.
- 35 2. "amended" The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said program in said memory is adapted to output the premium and to receive a user's request input via said terminal to accept the offered premium as consideration to contract the education fees and further adapted to perform a credit card transaction to pay for the premium.
- 40 3. "amended" The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said program in said memory is adapted to receive a customer request input via said terminal to pay the contracted education fee amount by quoting the admission number and further adapted to perform a credit card transaction or on-line bank transfer to
- 45 settle with the contracting institution offering the previous premium.

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4. "amended" A method and process for user to contract a future education fee amount now and paying for the said education fees in the future using a central controller including a CPU, a data base element connected to said CPU and a memory operatively connected to said CPU and containing a program adapted to be executed by said CPU for calculating the factors, values and premium and a terminal adapted for communicating with said CPU over a network, the method comprising the steps of:

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inputting the years to commencement to the controller via the terminal;  
inputting the selected institution to the controller via the terminal;  
inputting the flexibility factor to the controller via the terminal;  
inputting the desired course information to the controller via the terminal;  
inputting the past academic results to the controller via the terminal;  
inputting the user's personal information to the controller via the terminal;  
inputting the education fee to be contracted payable per period criteria to the controller via the terminal;

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in response to user's information verifying the inputted said information against selected institution's minimum qualifying criteria including, selected course availability, acceptability of the education fee to be contracted as proposed by user in accordance to preprogram heuristic rules;

receiving a response;

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wherein the step of receiving a response is one of acceptance;  
calculating and providing the historical volatility of the selected course fee;  
determining and providing the demand factor for the selected course;  
determining and providing the desirability factor of the user;  
determining and providing the current selected course fee;  
determining and providing the risk free rate covering the period up to commencement of course;

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calculating a premium that gives the user a right but not obligation within a future period equal or less to the period before the course commence to pay a contracted education fee amount, for the selected education course which satisfied the course information and year of commencement where such right is conditional on receiving an admission offer from said institution by having the CPU execute said program;

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outputting the premium to the terminal; and

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wherein the step of receiving a response is one of rejection, outputting a message advising the problem encountered and ask user to revise user's information inputs or terminate request.

5. "amended" A data processing apparatus for user to contract a future education fee amount now and paying for the said education fees in the future , comprising:

- 5 a CPU ;  
a data base element connected to said CPU;  
a memory operatively connected to said CPU, said memory containing a program adapted to be executed by said CPU and said CPU and memory co-operatively adapted to receive user's information; and

10 said program applying the said information, calculating the required factors or values based on heuristic rules programmed by the selected institution and using these factors with user's information further calculates the premium in consideration to contract the education fees amount as determined by the user in  
15 user's information where such premium includes a right but not obligation to pay the said fees within a future period for the selected course with the selected institution on the condition of being offered admission by said institution before commencement date.

20 6. "amended" The apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said program is adapted to receive user's information comprising the date of commencement or years to commencement, course criteria, institution offering the said course, past academic results, user's personal information, the education fee amount to be contracted payable per period to the selected institution for the said course  
25 selected and the user's flexibility factor for the selected course.

30 7. "amended" The apparatus according to claims 5, wherein said program is adapted to receive at least one of the first information describing the proposed education fee amount to be contracted, second information concerning the desired number of years before commencement of the selected course, third information concerning user past academic results, fourth information concerning user personal data, fifth information concerning the selected institution, sixth information concerning the selected course, seventh information concerning the user's flexibility factor for the selected course and  
35 wherein said program is further adapted to use at least one of the above information to determine whether user's selected institution's requirements have been met based on heuristic rules;

40 in response to user's information satisfying selected institution's requirements, said program is further adapted to calculate the historical volatility of the selected education course fee, the current education fee of the selected course, a factor describing the desirability of the user and the demand factor of the selected course, the risk free interest rate covering the period before commencement;

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the said program is further adapted to utilize the said historical volatility of the education fee for the selected course, the said current education fee of the selected course, the said user's flexibility factor, the said desirability factor of user, the said demand factor of the selected course, the said risk free rate, the fees payable and the said years to commencement to calculate the premium in consideration to contract the future education fee now where such premium includes a right but not obligation to pay for said education fee and on the condition of being offered an admission to the selected institution for the selected course before commencement date;

outputting this premium for consideration by user; and

receiving a request from user either to accept this premium or revise user information parameters or terminate service.

8. "amended" The apparatus according to claim 5 wherein said program in said memory is adapted to receive an indication that a user has paid the premium and further to update a database to reflect the transaction.

9. "amended" The apparatus according to claim 5 wherein said the program in said memory is adapted to request user to revise user's information parameter over the network in response to initial user's information failure to satisfy the selected institution's requirements.

10. "amended" The apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the said program in said memory program is adapted to calculate the premium based in part upon user's information satisfying more than one of the minimum requirements set by the selected institution.

11. "amended" The apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the said program in said memory is adapted to calculate the premium based at least in part on the formula:

$$\text{Premium} = B * L * C * R$$

where B represents a modified Black Scholes formula, L is a factor concerning the expected enrolment demand on the subject course, and C is a factor related to the desirability of the user, and R is a factor related to the flexibility of the user's education plans.

12. "amended" The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said database contains information about consummated contracts, open contracts, past premiums being offered and secure accessed for institutions and users.

13. "amended" A method for user to contract a future education fee amount now and paying for the said education fees in the future , comprising the steps of:

5 receiving user's information over a network;

in response to the said information, calculating the required factors based on heuristic rules programmed by the selected institution and using these factors with user's information to calculate the premium in consideration to contract the education fees amount as determined by the user in user's information where such premium includes a right but not obligation to pay the said fees within a future period for the selected course on the condition of being offered admission by said institution before commencement date.

14. "amended" The method according to claim 13, wherein the step of receiving user's information includes receiving the date of commencement or years to commencement , course criteria, institution offering the said course, past academic results, user's personal information, the education fee amount to be contracted payable per period to the selected institution for the said course selected and the user's flexibility factor for the selected course.

15. "amended " The method according to claim 13, further comprising of the steps of:

25 receive at least one of the first information describing the proposed education fee amount to be contracted, second information concerning the desired number of years before commencement of the selected course, third information concerning user past academic results, fourth information concerning user personal data, fifth information concerning the selected institution, sixth information concerning the selected course, seventh information concerning the flexibility factor of the selected course and wherein said program is further adapted to use the at least one of the above information to determine whether user's selected institution's requirements have been met based on heuristic rules;

35 in response to user's information satisfying selected institution's requirements, calculates the historical volatility of the selected education course fee, determine the current education fee of the selected course, calculates a factor describing the desirability of the user and the demand factor of the selected course, determine the risk free interest rate covering the period before commencement;

45 in response to the calculated factors and determined values, utilizing the said historical volatility of the selected education fee, the said current education fee, the said user's flexibility factor, the said desirability factor of user, the said demand factor of the selected course, the said risk free rate, the fees payable and

the said years to commencement to calculate the premium to contract the future education fee now where such premium includes a right but not obligation to pay for said education fee and on the condition of being offered an admission to the selected institution for the selected course before commencement date;

outputting this premium for consideration by user; and

receiving a request from user either to accept this premium or revise user information parameters over a network.

16. "amended" The method according to claim 13, further comprising the steps of receiving an indication that a user has paid the premium and further updating a database to reflect the transaction.

17. "amended" The method according to claim 13, further comprising the step of requesting user to revise user's information parameter over the network in response to initial user's information failing to satisfy the selected institution's requirements.

18. "amended" The method according to claim 13, further comprising the steps of receiving a customer request input via said terminal to accept the offered premium as consideration to contract the education fees, a step to perform a credit card transaction to pay for the premium and a step to store the transaction information in a database.

19. "amended" The method according to claim 18, further comprising the steps of receiving an instruction by user to pay the contracted education fee amount by quoting the admission number and further adapted to perform a credit card transaction or on-line bank transfer to settle with the contracted institution offering the previous premium.

20. "amended" The method according to claim 13, wherein the calculation of the premium is based in part upon user's information satisfying more than one of the minimum requirements set the selected institution.

21. The method according to claim 13, wherein the calculating steps of the premium is based at least in part on the formula:

$$\text{Premium price} = B * L * C * R$$

where B represents a modified Black Scholes formula, L is a factor concerning the expected enrolment demand on the subject course and C is a factor related to the desirability of the user, and R is a factor related to the flexibility of the user's education plans.

22. "amended" Computer executable process steps operative to control a computer over a network, stored on a computer readable medium for user to contract a future education fee amount now and paying for the said education fees in the future, comprising:

5 a step to receive user's information;  
a step to determine if user's information has satisfied the selected institution minimum requirements;  
a step of responding to the said determination step;  
10 in response to a positive determination, a step to calculate the historical volatility of the selected course's fee, the current fee, the demand factor of the selected course, the risk free interest rate for the period to commencement;  
a step to include the above results and initial user's information to calculate the premium in consideration to contract the education fee amount where such  
15 contract includes a right but not obligation to pay the contracted education fee subject to receiving an offer of admission by the contracted institution before commencement date;  
a step to output the premium for user's consideration;  
a step to receive user's acceptance or revision; and  
20 in response to a negative determination, a step to ask user to revise user's information;

23. "amended" A method for user to determine a premium to contract the cost of a future education fee amount now, comprising the steps of:

25 inquiring an education course price in the future for a selected course with a selected institution using a range of course price payable in the future and the expected time frame to commence the course;  
receiving a response to provide user's information; and  
30 receiving a response as to the premium in consideration to contract the cost of a future education fee amount now.

24. "amended" The method according to claim 23, further including the steps of using said contract to secure and pay for the contracted education fee for the  
35 selected course with the selected institution when an offer of admission has been granted by said institution before the commencement date.

25. "amended" The method according to claim 23, wherein said step of  
40 inquiring on an education course includes providing at least one of the first information describing the proposed education fee amount to be contracted, second information concerning the desired number of years before commencement of the selected course, third information concerning user past academic results, fourth information concerning user personal data, fifth  
45 information concerning the selected institution, sixth information concerning the selected course, and seventh information concerning the flexibility factor of the selected course.

26. "amended" A data processing apparatus for selling a contract to lock in a future cost of an education fee now comprising:

5 a terminal adapted to communicate with a central controller that calculates a premium as consideration for a contract with rights but not obligation to pay the future cost of an education fee for an education course within a specified future period, for a particular education course with a selected institution wherein said contract includes a condition of admission to the institution before the  
10 commencement date;

said terminal adapted to transmit to the central controller user's information comprising at least one of the first information describing the proposed future education fee amount to be contracted, second information concerning the  
15 desired number of years before commencement of the selected course, third information concerning user past academic results, fourth information concerning user personal data, fifth information concerning the selected institution, sixth information concerning the selected course, seventh information concerning the user's flexibility factor of the selected course;

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20 and if said user's information satisfying selected institution's requirements, further adapted to receive from the central controller a premium in consideration to contract said education fee satisfying the above user's information with the selected institution.

25 27. "amended" The apparatus according to claim 26, wherein said terminal is adapted to transmit a user's request to pay for the premium as consideration for the contract with the selected institution and further adapted to perform a credit card transaction to pay for the said premium.

30 28. "amended" The apparatus according to claim 27, wherein said terminal is adapted to transmit a user's request to pay the contracted education fee amount by quoting the admission number and further adapted to perform a credit card transaction or on-line bank transfer to settle with the contracting institution  
35 offering the previous premium.

29. "delete"

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